

VZCZCXRO1410
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHNEH
DE RUEHNE #1151/01 1561104
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 051104Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6852
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1783
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4736
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3948
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0617
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2179
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6100
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2628
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9530
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3776
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6481
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8131
RHOVVKG/COMSEVENTHFLT
RHMCSUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 001151

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP, AC, PM

STATE FOR INR/MR

STATE FOR SCA/INS, PM/CBM, PM/PRO

STATE FOR SCA/PPD, PA/RRU

STATE FOR AID/APRE-A

USDOC FOR 4530/IEP/ANESA/OSA FOR BILL MURPHY

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: OBAMA SPEECH IN CAIRO: INDIA MEDIA REPORT I

Summary: President Obama's speech Thursday to the Muslim world was very well received in India, home to one of the world's largest Muslim audiences, the media reported. The President's remarks were carried live and in subsequent news bulletins on key radio and television stations throughout India and printed prominently in most newspapers. Newspapers reported that the speech struck a chord with Muslim academics, intellectuals and media persons, some of whom participated in special programs organized at the American Centers in India. Muslim leaders generally agreed that President Obama's speech was welcome and a "good beginning," but some want to wait until they see some actual changes in U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East.

Editorial opinion will begin appearing in the coming days and will be reported in subsequent cables. Some notable reactions published in today's newspapers follow in Section A below; for major electronic media coverage, see Section B. End summary.

SECTION A

¶1. "Obama's eloquent address conspicuously excluded any reference to the Kashmir issue in the Indian sub-continent, home of the largest concentration of Muslims in the world, likely to the dismay of Pakistan and its separatist proxies who have made it a cause, and the delight of Indian nationalists who believe it is a domestic or regional concern." -- Chidanand Rajghatta, Washington correspondent, THE TIMES OF INDIA

¶2. "Obama's speech Cairo University was a masterpiece in political oratory. Never have his Muslim roots been put to better use. What was most significant about Obama's speech was not what he said, but how he said it. America will not change its policies, the ground realities in the region and across the Islamic world will not vanish overnight, Israelis and Palestinians will not see the light suddenly. But the speech might just help in changing the mode of discussion in US-Islamic engagement." -- Indrani Bagchi, Diplomatic Editor, THE TIMES OF INDIA

¶3. "Obama's speech has changed the world order for ever. I am very much excited after hearing Obama. I feel Obama is a person who means what he says. It is a new beginning and also a historic moment not just for Muslims but for the entire world." -- Kamal Farooqi, member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (THE TELEGRAPH English daily)

¶4. "Obama has made a good beginning. His words have sent a positive message to the entire world and also to America." -- Zafarul Islam Khan of the Milli Council, an all-India body of scholars and academics (THE TELEGRAPH English daily)

¶5. "We would like to see if Obama is going to follow up his good words with good action." -- Mansoor Mohammed of Zakat India Foundation, a humanitarian organization

NEW DELHI 00001151 002 OF 004

(THE TELEGRAPH English daily)

¶6. "The Muslim world was cautiously watching each and every utterance of his. Obama has said some good words about the community, and we are happy about that. If he meant what he said, then well and fine. But even now he seems to have different attitudes towards Israel and Iran. This is something he has to explain." -- Kamaludeen Jaffri of the Jamiat Ulema, a leading religious body (THE TELEGRAPH English daily)

¶7. "He is going in the right direction by voicing concerns about women's rights. He is a family man and understands the importance of women's education for the development of the society." Prof. Vijaylakshmi, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) New Delhi, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, New Delhi (IANS wire service)

¶8. "It is an attempt on his part to leave the past mistakes behind and move ahead in partnership with the Muslim world. This can be a new beginning in solidifying the severed ties between the Americans and the Muslims. His speech has a great vision in it and it is extremely important that we respond in the same spirit." Zafar Agha, senior journalist, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, New Delhi (IANS wire service)

¶9. "It is for the first time that an American president has addressed the Muslims not from the safety of the White House but rather in the veins of a city (in the Muslim world). We must all react positively to his gracious effort." -- Islamic leader and professor Aktarul Wasey, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, New Delhi (IANS wire service)

¶10. "India has the second largest population of Muslims in the world after Indonesia. I am surprised that he completely ignored Indian Muslims." -- Sultan Shaheen, a prominent journalist, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, New Delhi (IANS wire service)

-- WALAYKUM ASSALAAM, SAY INDIAN MUSLIMS TO OBAMA

¶11. "I have heard and read speeches of many world leaders. But I can honestly say that I have never heard anything like this before. I listened to Obama as a Muslim, and must say that he has given the Muslims and the world a new hope." - Leading Urdu poet, lyricist and commentator Hasan Kamal, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, Mumbai (THE TIMES OF INDIA)

¶12. "By quoting the Quran in the right context, Obama has reiterated that Islam stands for peace and reconciliation. He reminded the Muslims of the Quranic commandment about being truthful when he quoted 'be conscious of God and always speak the truth.'" -- Zeenat Shaukat Ali, teacher of Islamic Studies, St Xavier's College, participating in a panel discussion at the

NEW DELHI 00001151 003 OF 004

American Center, Mumbai (THE TIMES OF INDIA)

¶13. "His speech will help reduce hostility between the USA and the Islamic world. It will open a new chapter of reconciliation between the largely aggrieved Muslim world and the West. Muslims must welcome it." -- Qasim Rasool Illyas of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, an influential Muslim body, participating in a panel discussion at the American Center, Mumbai (THE TIMES OF INDIA)

¶14. "He has openly talked of Palestine's genuine right of being a separate nation and Israel's right to exist. This is the best possible speech one could have expected from him." Prof Mushirul Hasan, historian and vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia (THE TIMES OF INDIA)

¶15. "We believe America's policies have been responsible for the spread of terrorism worldwide. His comments have given us hope. But he will have to translate his words into action. For that he needs a definite plan of action." Member of Parliament Mahmood Madhani (INDIAN EXPRESS)

¶16. "We can see that there is a perceptible change in America's attitude. He has said we should not be prisoners of the past. It was not the language of power." Muslim League leader and Union Minister of State E Ahamed (INDIAN EXPRESS)

¶17. "Terrorism is a fall-out of aggression and injustice. Speeches will not work, until a serious attempt is made to end aggression." -- Syed Ahmad Bukhari, Imam, Jama Masjid (grand mosque), New Delhi (report in Urdu dailies)

¶18. "Bush's approach was arrogant. Obama is mild. He is willing to listen to others. We see some good qualities in him. But when you read between the lines after hearing what he said, one can see that there is not going to be a major change in America's foreign policy." -- Mujtaba Farooq, Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind (INDIAN EXPRESS)

¶19. "Obama has provided an opportunity to Islamic nations to forge a new relationship. Only time will tell how Muslims respond to this new offer." - Editorial MUMBAI SAMACHAR Gujarati daily

SECTION B: ELECTRONIC MEDIA COVERAGE

¶20. All Indian TV channels and networks went live with President Obama's speech, including the national broadcaster Doordarshan (viewership: 450 million), Aajtak (viewership: 31 million) NDTV 24X7 (viewership:

16 million), NDTV India (viewership: 26 million), Zee TV (viewership: 20 million), Star TV (viewership: 24 million), Sahara TV (viewership: 11 million), CNN-IBN (20 million) and TIMES NOW (20 million). The new TV News X attended the Kolkata program and interviewed PAO Kolkata Doug Kelley. Most channels followed up the

NEW DELHI 00001151 004 OF 004

speech with studio panel discussions and talk shows. It was the top news story in all consecutive news bulletins throughout the day.

¶21. Of particular interest, ETV Urdu (India viewership: 8 million), India's largest Urdu language television station, carried the complete speech live. Following the broadcast, the channel held a panel discussion that featured Consul General Cornelis Keur and DCM Steven White. ETV Urdu is featured on cable systems throughout the region, including in the Gulf countries. The program was also telecast for a shorter duration on the ETV network's 11 channels broadcast in other Indian languages. TV9, a south India Telugu channel also broadcast a live program featuring our Hyderabad CG and DCM. Other prominent regional language channels covering the speech included: Saakshi TV, and Zee TV (Andhra Pradesh); Sun TV (40 million) (Tamil Nadu); and Chabbis Ghanta (5 million) and Star Ananda (5 million) (West Bengal).

¶22. Several channels dedicated half-hour special shows during prime time slots like 9 pm and 10 pm when senior journalists and commentators were seen discussing the impact of the President's speech on the rest of the world and India. Some voiced the opinion that India seems to have been "left out" this time around. Terming it a "major shift in U.S. policy" most TV stations reported the speech as being viewed by Indians with "skepticism but also with a lot of hope".

¶23. Following the speech, PAO Larry Schwartz, participated in live panel discussions during the prime time news hours on two of India's top television stations: Headlines Today (5 million) and NDTV 24X7 (16 million).

¶24. The Embassy also utilized its webpage and Facebook to promote the speech and encourage country-wide discussion.
BURLEIGH